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ABSTRACT

Guidance Services Position Statement was prepared in response to a need expressed by people engaged either in developing school guidance activities or in expanding and improving such activities. The intent was to provide a guide or a framework upon which a guidance program might be constructed or made more effective. Five major sections focus on: (1) basic rationale for guidance; (2) basic services; (3) current issues; (4) evaluation criteria; and (5) counselor role model. The basic rationale for guidance programs is to discover guidance where it occurs, sharpen abilities to meet the goals and build its many forms into a planned total effort aimed at helping the whole child develop to his/her full potential. Guidance services felt to be basic to all guidance programs include individual counseling, group processes, pupil assessment, information, parental involvement, referrals, orientation, staff consultation, pupil records, placement, research and evaluation. The ad hoc committee recommends 31 criteria for evaluating school guidance programs, and defines the role of the counselor in a model job description which includes qualifications, role and duties. (BN)

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Guidance Services in Pennsylvania

Position Statement

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Division of Pupil Personnel Services
Bureau of Instructional Support Services
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction v

Rationale 1

Guidance Services 3

- Individual Counseling 5
- Group Processes 6
- Pupil Assessment 7
- Information Resources 8
- Parental Involvement 9
- Use of Referral Services 10
- Orientation 11
- Staff Cooperation 12
- Pupil Records 13
- Placement 14
- Research and Evaluation 15

Issues 17

- Developmental, Crisis and Preventative Counseling 19
- Confidentiality 21
- Peer Counseling 24
- Counselor-Pupil Ratio 26
- The Pupil Personnel Services Team 27
- The Need for Guidance Supervision 28
- Differentiated Staffing 29
- Guidance Considerations in the AVTS-Sending School Relationship 31
- Life-Career Development 33

The Ad Hoc Committee for Guidance Services 35

- Proposed Evaluative Criteria 37

Preparation of the Job Description 39

Related Publications 41

Appendix 43

- Chapter 7, Regulations of the State Board of Education 45
- Act 287, Confidentiality of Student Communications 48
- American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics 49

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this paper is to present the viewpoint of the Division of Pupil Personnel Services in four areas: the rationale for guidance, the services of a guidance program, current issues in guidance and the procedure for defining the counselor's role in the guidance program. While primarily the viewpoint of the division, the paper also reflects the thinking of many counselors, counselor educators and advisory groups who contributed extensively to the several preliminary drafts of this document. Further input from outside the division can be found in the ad hoc committee report which appears in the fourth section described below.

The paper was prepared in response to a need expressed by people engaged either in developing school guidance activities or in expanding and improving such activities. The intent was to provide a guide or a framework upon which a guidance program, consistent with local philosophy, might be constructed or made more effective.

The document, designed not only for counselors and other pupil personnel specialists, but also for other educators, is divided into five major sections:

1. In the first section we present a basic rationale for guidance, guidance programs and the use of counselors. Although we advocate a concept of guidance that may not be universally accepted, we believe it provides one workable base for building purposeful local district programs and for creating positive feelings about the immense present or potential value of the local district guidance effort.

2. The second section contains our position statements regarding the 11 guidance services which we feel should be basic to all guidance programs.

3. Some of the major issues of current concern in guidance are discussed in the third section. Included in most of the discussions are our opinions as to the proper way to deal with these issues.

4. In the fourth section we present the report of an ad hoc committee convened to recommend criteria for evaluating school guidance programs.

5. The final section deals with the process of defining the role of the counselor in relation to the rationale and guidance services presented in previous sections.

GUIDANCE, THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM, THE COUNSELOR -- A RATIONALE

The staff member who announces to a class of 30 students that two plus two equals four is involved in information dissemination.

The staff member who, through a combination of theatrics, emotional appeal, logic and skilled persuasiveness, implants in the memory of most of those 30 students the fact that two plus two equals four is involved in teaching.

The staff member who focuses on David the dreamer in the second seat in the third row, who is aware of the home situation which occupies David's thoughts, who knows of the emotional concerns that block David's attention, and who tries to marshal a knowledge of human personality to penetrate David's defenses and motivate him to accept that two plus two equals four, is involved in guidance.

Guidance is the mass of education individualized and, in the process, personalized and humanized. Its aim is to meet the developmental needs of each child in the educational system. It draws its justification from the basic assumption of our democratic society that each human being is of value and has a right to pursue optimal development. To the extent that education is concerned with the development of each child to the limits of his or her potential, there is a basis for the existence of guidance.

Guidance, in its efforts to help the individual in the pursuit of potential, is concerned with helping that individual become aware of his or her potential and the possible pathways of pursuit. It is concerned with helping the individual develop decision-making skills which are badly needed in coping with a rapidly changing society which offers declining stability and demands ever-greater adaptability. It is concerned with supplying access to the full array of personal, educational and career options. And it is concerned with preserving a delicate balance of personal enrichment and societal benefit.

Guidance is found in every classroom, in every well-coached team, in most major administrative decisions, in the nurse's office, in curricular and extracurricular offerings, in the house calls of the home and school visitor, in the clubs, in the peer influences on the bus and in the halls, and in all the varied experiences of each and every child.

* * *

The guidance program attempts to discover guidance where it exists, to sharpen its ability to accomplish its goals, to build its many forms into a planned total effort aimed at helping the whole child to develop to his or her full potential. There has always been a degree of guidance in education, but often to little or misdirected effect. The guidance program is the effort by skilled practitioners to tie it all together, to focus it on the many and varied needs of the individual and to gauge its success.

Just as a child, if left alone, will experience learning, so will the child experience guidance. While it is obvious that the complexity of today's society demands organized and planned programs of learning for full benefit to both society and the individual, it should be equally obvious that guidance efforts aimed at the full and complete development of the child also need to be well organized and planned.

* * *

The counselor is a specialist in guidance. Just as there must be a program, there must also be those who directly implement the program through individual and group counseling, who help and advise others in their widely varied guidance activities, who focus the many components of the program on its desired goals and who evaluate the success of the program.

The counselor is many things: a consultant to teachers and parents, a team member with other members of the pupil personnel staff, an interpreter of records and tests, a source for a wide variety of information, a helper for the struggling individual, a friend, a confidant, an advocate. But above all the counselor is the trained and experienced expert who gives direction and meaning to the many forces of guidance.

There is no question that guidance always has and always will exist in our schools and our daily lives. There is an increasing acceptance that guidance, like learning, must be organized into a well-planned and meaningful program aimed at the needs of all children. It follows that there must be an adequate staff of trained and experienced individuals to plan, implement and evaluate this essential program.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

On May 10, 1974, the State Board of Education of Pennsylvania adopted regulations dealing with pupil personnel services. These regulations state that each guidance services program shall include 10 services which are listed in the regulations. The regulations, as adopted by the State Board, are printed in the appendix.

At the time of publication of this paper, new regulations are being proposed. However, we feel that the basic services advocated in the present regulations will continue to be essential components of every guidance program. In this section of the paper, we will devote a page to each of these services, outlining our position with regard to their implementation in the schools.

It should be stressed that the order in which we present the services does not in any way reflect priority. We believe all guidance programs should offer each one of these services, and we hesitate to rate any one as more important than another.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

We believe that:

1. Individual counseling is, and should continue to be, an essential element of all guidance programs from kindergarten through adult life.

2. Counselors should give first priority to their availability and should keep their schedules flexible enough to allow for a prompt response to all requests for counseling.

3. While the main thrust of individual counseling should be in implementing a well-planned developmental guidance program, the continuing need for counseling in any crisis situations must be recognized and provided for adequately.

4. Individual counseling appropriate to individual needs should be available to all students, but should be extended only when necessary. To provide for the best possible use of counselor time and availability, individual counseling should never be used to provide services better delivered in group situations.

5. Individual counseling services provided by school districts should not be limited to students, but should be available to all members of the community whose educational and vocational counseling needs may be dealt with most effectively by the school counseling staff.

6. A district policy, clearly outlining the extent of the counselor's right to keep confidential any information received in an individual interview, should be established and made known to all concerned persons, both within the school and in the community.

7. Students in individual counseling should be made aware of the limits within which the counselor or others can help in the decision-making process and beyond which the counselee must accept personal responsibility for a decision.

8. In individual counseling, the counselor should be flexible in choice of counseling method, selecting the technique or combination of techniques best suited to the content of the interview, the needs of the counselee and the personality of the counselor.

9. The physical facilities for counseling should be designed for maximum privacy and accessibility, located, if possible, some distance from the administrative offices.

10. Administrative directives concerning guidance and the responsibilities of counselors should support individual counseling as an essential element of the total educational program.

GROUP PROCESSES

We believe that:

1. Every guidance program should offer a continuum of group activities involving both group guidance and group counseling. Counselors should draw upon those techniques and processes along the continuum which are best suited to the specific objectives of the group activity.

2. No counseling program is complete without group counseling for students whose needs may best be met in a group setting.

3. Group counseling is an especially valuable technique in that it provides a unique opportunity for group members to compare their feelings, attitudes and values; to test their perceptions of reality with those of their peers; and to improve their ability to communicate ideas and feelings.

4. Group counseling provides the counselor with the opportunity to observe students interacting in a situation more typical of their normal peer environment, allowing for a better understanding of behavior in this context.

5. Every effort should be made to assure confidentiality among the students engaged in group counseling. However, prior to initiating group counseling, the counselor should inform the counselees that the number of participants makes any guarantee of confidentiality impossible.

6. Schools establishing a group counseling program for the first time should describe the activity and its purpose to the faculty, administration and general public and should update these groups periodically so that there are no misunderstandings about the program.

7. Group processes often offer an efficient and economical alternative to individual counseling, especially when they serve as vehicles for disseminating and interpreting information and for developing decision-making and problem-solving skills.

8. The instructional classroom is an ideal setting for the introduction and interpretation of guidance-related information and, in selected cases, for the use of group counseling.

9. The guidance staff should assist and encourage teachers in the use of group processes and techniques as part of the regular instructional program.

10. The advantages of group processes should not be limited to work with students, but are equally applicable to situations involving school staff and parent groups. Parent guidance and counseling groups are an effective means of improving the relationship between the school and community.

PUPIL ASSESSMENT

We believe that:

1. Each school district should have a coordinated and purposeful system of testing built upon the objectives of the school system.

2. The testing used to determine pupil aptitude, achievement and interest should be appropriate to each educational level and should be in support of pupil self-appraisal, parental information and educational planning.

3. The guidance department's role in the selection of tests should be to advise a district testing committee under the leadership of and responsible to a member of the administration.

4. The guidance department's role in administering and scoring tests should consist primarily of instructing, preparing and supervising members of the paraprofessional, instructional and administrative staff, who would conduct all total grade and large group testing. The counselor's role in the actual administration of tests should be limited to testing individuals or small groups for purposes related to individual counseling or directly related to the objectives of the guidance program.

5. The guidance department's chief testing role should be to interpret test results for students, faculty, parents and administrators and to provide instruction and assistance to teachers and administrators who are called upon to provide interpretation.

6. No standardized tests should be administered if the results will not in some way benefit the person tested.

7. Test results should be revealed and explained to the person tested, within the limitations of the person's maturity level and ability to comprehend.

8. Standardized tests should be conducted only when local need for the data they provide has been established and defined and when such data is not otherwise available.

9. Only tests that are determined to be sufficiently free of sexual and cultural bias should be used. If bias-free tests are not available in the area being assessed, the bias should be considered in the interpretation of test results.

10. No pupil assessment program should be considered complete if it does not provide for the examination and use of evaluation techniques other than formal testing.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

We believe that:

1. Each school district should have adequate, accurate and relevant informational resources for students to use in support of educational, vocational and personal decision making and problem solving, and should help students acquire the knowledge necessary to effectively use such resources.

2. Each school district should establish guidance resource centers which serve as bases for the collection, use and distribution of materials and equipment concerned with disseminating the resources noted in the previous paragraph.

3. These centers should be strategically located, be staffed with trained paraprofessionals who serve under the direct supervision of the district guidance supervisor, and be open at hours convenient for both school and community use.

4. There should be a full program of student, faculty and community use of the center. The program should include instructional and guidance-oriented group work, meetings with human resource personnel in the community and related counseling.

5. Each school district should have a well-developed plan to assure maximum student and community use of all available resources.

6. Counselors should provide instructional staff with guidance information and should cooperate with teachers in activities which use these materials to emphasize the relatedness of academic instruction, occupational opportunities and personal-social adjustment.

7. All students should be instructed in the process of making full and efficient use of the information available in the guidance resource centers.

8. All counselors should be aware of the informational resources available to the district, the ways to access those resources, the applicability of specific resources to given grade levels and the procedures for operating any necessary equipment.

9. All informational resource materials should be continuously assessed in terms of both appropriatness and current applicability. Included in the assessment of these materials should be the continuing examination and elimination of materials which reflect racial and sexual bias or which contain cultural or sexual stereotyping.

10. An effort should be made to determine the full range of students' guidance-related informational needs and to provide such information directly through guidance facilities and efforts or in concert with appropriate outside agencies.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We believe that:

1. Each school district should develop a system of parental involvement in the guidance program. Involvement could be in the form of individual and group conferences as well as periodic publications relating to student needs, educational objectives and requirements, and other information pertinent to student progress.

2. The counselor's schedule should provide for his or her availability during hours convenient to parents.

3. The guidance department should take the initiative in encouraging parental participation in individual and group conferences. To be available is often not enough, especially in districts which traditionally have made little effort to involve parents in the school programs.

4. There should be an ongoing program of parent orientation meetings designed to convey the purposes of guidance and to provide information about the educational program.

5. There should be individual and group opportunities for parents to participate in planning activities related to the child's development as an individual within the family unit.

6. The guidance department should be involved in developing a systematic districtwide method of communicating information about students to their parents and should assume responsibility for continuing guidance input once the system is operating.

7. Recognizing the special impact of the parent in the life of the elementary child, the guidance department and the school administration should strive for parental understanding of the guidance objectives and, through that understanding, for the parental support and cooperation essential in working with children that age.

8. Counselors should always be aware of the content and outcomes of parental conferences with teachers so the counselors may apply this information to their total picture of the child's development and may use this knowledge in future contacts with the student and parent.

9. The guidance department should share with parents (within the limits of the counselor's pledge of confidentiality to the student) test, survey and interview information concerning the child's abilities, interests, aptitudes and achievements so that the parent may have an accurate picture of the child's development.

10. As the middle and secondary school student becomes increasingly self-directed, care should be taken to avoid the increasing danger of inhibiting counselor-student relationships through excessive or misdirected parental involvement.

USE OF REFERRAL SERVICES

We believe that:

1. The guidance department should maintain extensive contact with community agencies and referral sources to secure their help in dealing with pupil needs which exceed the function or capacity of the school and the school guidance program.

2. While in many districts other members of the pupil personnel team--such as the school social worker, the home and school visitor, the school psychologist or the school nurse--will be in active contact with referral sources, the outcome and follow-up of these referrals will almost always involve the counselor. Procedures should therefore be established to assure the counselor's knowledge of, and involvement in, all school referral activities.

3. There must be a conscious and continuous effort by the guidance department to develop and maintain a high degree of mutual trust between the guidance staff and the staffs of community referral agencies.

4. There should be a continuing attempt to assure feedback from the referral agency. The information so obtained should be shared with staff members who have a legitimate interest in, and use for, the feedback information. The sharing of such information must take place within the limits imposed by federal regulations and school pupil records policy.

5. While the guidance department should continue to use referral services in the community setting, efforts should be made to draw community services into the school for more efficient and widespread use.

6. Parents and students should be informed of the purposes of the recommended referral agency and how these purposes relate to the school's objectives. Parental and student consent should be secured prior to the referral.

7. In supplying information to the referral agency, in receiving reports and responses from the agency and in sharing agency-supplied information with staff members, care should be taken to insure that there is no violation of the school records policy, of the counselor's pledge of confidentiality or of the student's right to privacy.

8. An effort should be made to use all the resources of the school before resorting to outside referral. Excessive and unnecessary use of outside referral tends to diminish the effectiveness of both the referral agencies and the services available to the school.

9. Where it is recognized that the student's problem is primarily the result of parental maladjustment or of conflict in the home, the parent should be encouraged to seek, and be provided assistance in locating, applicable referral agency help.

10. A listing of referral agencies and information concerning their services should be made available by the guidance staff to any member of the community who seeks this help.

ORIENTATION

We believe that:

1. Each school district should have a program of orientation activities which insures that student movement between educational levels or from school to work can be accomplished with the greatest possible ease of personal, social and educational adjustment.

2. Adequate orientation activites are essential at all major points of transition: from home to school entry, from the elementary to the middle level, from the middle level to the senior high school or the area vocational-technical school, from the school to post-secondary education or employment, from one school district to another, from student to drop-out status and from drop-out status to resumption of education.

3. Orientation is the responsibility of the entire school, but the guidance department, with administrative support, must play the major role in sponsoring and developing these activities.

4. All orientation presentations should include a listing and explanation of available guidance services along with information on how the student may secure such services.

5. Within groups entering schools or school levels, there will be individuals who need help in adjusting to the new environment. The counselors are responsible for encouraging teachers to indentify these students so that the counselors can provide the needed assistance.

6. Counselors should spend considerable time on the individual counseling of students who have indicated their intention to drop out. The counselor should stress the continuing availability of guidance and counseling services.

7. The guidance department is responsible for coordinating the securing and use of test results and sending-school records and for conducting whatever additional testing, interviewing and informational surveying is needed to help the student adjust to the school's program.

8. Care should be taken to assure that students entering or leaving individually are provided with the full range of orientation services provided for groups in transition.

9. The guidance department should be responsible for orienting new teachers to the services and requirements of the counseling staff and the guidance program.

10. As part of the effort to involve parents in the educational and career development of their children, the guidance department should extend its orientation service to include parents at the major transitional points.

STAFF COOPERATION

We believe that:

1. There should be continuous communication between school guidance personnel, teachers, administrators and other educational specialists to create optimum learning environments for all pupils.

2. The instructional staff is a tremendous resource for the extension of guidance and guidance-related services. Every effort should be made to use this resource fully in every guidance activity.

3. An extensive effort should be made to foster understanding of the guidance function among all members of the staff so that guidance services may be properly and fully used by the staff.

4. Guidance staff should help the instructional staff to understand the learning process and to remove obstacles which inhibit efficient learning by students.

5. The elementary counselor should view the elementary developmental guidance program as very much a joint effort by the counselor and the teacher, with the teacher often the more important partner in terms of time, opportunity and influence.

6. A key element in the success of the guidance program is the cooperation of counselors, teachers, administrators and other educational specialists. Selling the program and gaining cooperation and acceptance is largely the counselor's responsibility, but administrative support is an essential part of that acceptance.

7. Great care should be taken to avoid breaking the pledge of confidentiality to the student, but every effort should be made within these restrictions to provide the concerned teacher with information pertinent to helping the student. The proper mixture of these two often opposing considerations will insure, on the one hand, students' confidence in the counselor's discretion and, on the other, teachers' confidence that they are considered full and active partners in the guidance effort.

8. The guidance department should be responsible for establishing and implementing a system of written communications (such as guidance newsletters, guidance columns in pupil personnel newsletters, monthly reports or bulletins), which should be organized to provide all staff with essential information relevant to guidance program activities.

9. To increase guidance participation by teachers, the key persons in the educational program, the guidance department should involve instructional staff members in counseling and consultative activities in areas appropriate to their training and experience.

10. Counselors should be aware of community agency contacts made by other staff members on behalf of their counselees so that duplication is avoided and all such activities are focused on a unified effort.

PUPIL RECORDS

We believe that:

1. There should be an articulated system of relevant and accurate pupil educational records beginning at kindergarten and continuing with the student to his or her highest educational level.

2. Each school district must adopt a plan for the collection, maintenance, security and dissemination of pupil records. The plan must conform to the "Guidelines for the Collection, Maintenance and Dissemination of Pupil Records" published by the Department of Education.

3. The mechanical aspects of record collection, maintenance, security and dissemination should be handled by the clerical and/or paraprofessional staff under the supervision of the chief school administrator or a person to whom the administrator has delegated such authority.

4. Each school district should have a committee made up of instructional, pupil personnel and administrative staff members, parents and students who are charged with deciding what information should be collected and maintained as part of the students' school record.

5. The counselor's primary concern and involvement in the area of pupil records should be to participate with the others listed above in determining the content of records and to interpret and apply that content in the education of the student.

6. The PDE guidelines' recommendation that the director of guidance be responsible for record maintenance and access refers only to the responsibility for establishing procedures for carrying out the school policy on pupil records, not for supervising the implementation of that policy or for assuring that it is applied appropriately.

7. Records information should not be released to students, parents or other authorized individuals without appropriate interpretation.

8. School district pupil records policies should allow for the retention of information necessary to permit full counseling, referral and placement service in the years following the student's departure from school.

9. The pupil records system should facilitate a clear and concise communication process among pupils, parents, teachers, administrators, post-secondary educational and vocational institutions and other authorized agencies. Records should be used for the welfare of the pupil. If the nature of the records inhibits such use, their retention should be reconsidered.

10. A centrally located records storage facility should be established to allow for easy access by those who hage a legitimate interest in the records information while providing for security from unauthorized use and accidental dissemination.

PLACEMENT

We believe that:

1. Each school district should provide placement assistance to students entering the labor market prior to or upon graduation, to students intent on pursuing postsecondary education and to all students seeking the proper educational program in preparation for postschool educational or vocational goals.

2. In job placement, the school district should use the services of government and private agencies to the extent possible, and should strive to offer a systematic program of school-directed services that complement those offered by the outside agencies and are directed toward all students not served by those agencies.

3. In educational placement, the school district should establish a close working relationship between the counseling staff and those institutions of postsecondary education to which significant numbers of the district's graduates apply.

4. The school administration and guidance department should cooperatively provide the opportunity for admissions officers to meet with students interested in their institutions.

5. The school administration and guidance department should cooperatively provide the opportunity for prospective employers to meet with potential employes, preferably at the job site.

6. School counselors should help all students to schedule courses and programs appropriate to their educational and vocational goals. We stress goals rather than abilities in the expectation that counselors will help students to shape their abilities, interests and aptitudes into appropriate and realistic goals.

7. The mechanical aspects of preparing and transmitting student records needed in support of educational or vocational placement should be supervised by the administration, with the guidance department being consulted about the most appropriate persons to be involved in the recommendation process.

8. An employment-placement committee whose membership includes community industrial and business leaders should be established and charged with determining the extent to which the school should engage in surveying job opportunities, with developing a survey instrument and with developing a procedure for using the instrument and survey results.

9. The guidance department, in cooperation with the administration, should develop a school policy and guidelines concerning released time for students to visit and be interviewed at employment sites and educational institutions.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

We believe that:

1. The guidance department should have a continuing program of self-evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its services.

2. There should be continuing studies of student characteristics, aspirations and performance to provide a sound basis for educational planning and programming.

3. The guidance department should share with the administration and the instructional staff the responsibility for evaluating all aspects of the educational program which affect student development.

4. The guidance department should be actively involved in interpreting Educational Quality Assessment results and in developing school programs aimed at adequate and efficient achievement of the Ten Goals of Quality Education.

5. All counselors should possess sufficient knowledge of research design, experimental techniques and educational measurement to adequately assess and interpret the results of the research and evaluation.

6. In school districts where there is no full-time director of research and evaluation, the administration and guidance supervisor should cooperatively set up the research and evaluation program; should recruit from the administrative, teaching and counseling staffs a sufficient number of persons knowledgeable in experimental technique, educational measurement and statistics to implement the program adequately; and should encourage total staff cooperation in carrying out the program.

7. While the sensitivity of the subject has caused many districts to fail to examine seriously their role in the formation of students' values systems, districts should recognize that the school program is going to have an effect in this area and should attempt to measure the impact.

8. To encourage instructional staff support of, and cooperation in, guidance research efforts and implementation of results, care should be taken to distinguish between administrative mandate and counselors' recommendations.

9. To provide for greater objectivity in the administration of tests, it should be made clear that any teacher-administered testing related to the research and evaluation program will not be used to evaluate individual teacher performance.

ISSUES

With the emergence of guidance as an integral part of the educational program, many questions have been raised about the best way to deliver a full program of guidance services. Should the counselor be primarily a remedial worker, or should the guidance program be designed to prevent most of the problems that would call for remediation? Is there a counselor-pupil ratio which would insure a better guidance program? How should guidance be involved in the career education and career development effort? How essential is confidentiality to the success of the counseling relationship? Should the guidance department encourage the extensive use of paraprofessionals? Is peer counseling worth the effort and the risk? Who will insure that full guidance services are provided for the area vocational-technical school student? Are guidance services strengthened through teamwork with other pupil personnel services?

Differences of opinion on these issues have resulted in some confusion on the part of local districts trying to develop plans for implementing a complete guidance program. Student, citizen and governmental advisory groups have made recommendations, but they are not in agreement, and may even have brought about more confusion.

Individual staff members of the Division of Pupil Personnel Services have often been asked to advise school personnel on these issues. Meeting as a group, we tried to arrive at a consensus on many of the questions raised. A draft of these consensus points was presented to approximately one hundred counselors, counselor educators and advisory committee members. We have tried to incorporate their thinking in our revision of the original draft.

In this section, we identify nine issues which we feel are of major concern to today's counselors, provide a general discussion of them and give our position on each issue.

It is our hope that this section now incorporates the thinking of not only the Division of Pupil Personnel Services but of many of the groups throughout the Commonwealth who have addressed guidance concerns. We offer it in the hope that it may help to resolve some of the confusion that has impeded the growth and effectiveness of guidance services in Pennsylvania.

DEVELOPMENTAL, CRISIS AND PREVENTATIVE COUNSELING

Guidance services are usually organized according to basic assumptions about how best to deliver services to pupils. Three approaches are typically described in literature: (1) crisis or remedial, (2) preventative and (3) developmental.

There seems to be considerable difference of opinion on just what should be included and emphasized in each of these approaches. For purposes of this discussion, we will resort to a rather narrow and restrictive definition of crisis and preventative guidance and a rather broad and inclusive one of developmental guidance.

A crisis or remedially oriented program stresses the identification, diagnosis and remediation of existing problems. Since this type of program is designed to repair aspects of normal development which have gone awry, it is specifically conceived and organized to respond to problems as they arise. This program deals with either individual cases or group problems. Individually, it is designed to aid the student who comes to the attention of the counselor either because the student can no longer function in the usual school environment or because he or she can no longer be assisted by usual methods. In the context or social-crisis intervention, the needs of such problem groups as truants, potential drop-outs, drug abusers and others are attended to by the counselor or appropriate referral personnel. It must be acknowledged that this is the type of program appearing most commonly in the school districts of Pennsylvania and possibly the nation. Its primacy is frequently justified by the realities of ratio and budget.

The crisis-oriented approach, however, has several shortcomings. Since not all pupils need this kind of attention, the program is not designed to benefit all pupils. Further, since the total guidance program is problem-oriented rather than directed to the normal development of pupils, the objectives are limited to immediate concerns and often have little long-range continuity. Finally, it gives scant attention to the prevention of problems before they occur.

A preventative guidance program stresses the prevention of problems by identifying pupils who may experience difficulty in school, such as those from broken homes, the economically disadvantaged, those who have disabilities and others. It is essential to this type of approach that causes of problems be identified and dealt with by instituting procedures which will either alleviate them or help children learn to cope with them in socially appropriate ways. In a preventative program, the resources of a range of personnel, including counselors, educational specialists and classroom teachers are mobilized to provide both direct and indirect intervention on behalf of children with potential problems.

The preventative approach provides service to a larger range of students than does the crisis-oriented approach. However, it is still based on the identification of potential problem pupils and, therefore, is not applicable to all students. In addition, by emphasizing the identification of problems, this approach is essentially negative with regard to the delivery of guidance services.

A developmental guidance program is organized to serve all pupils at all grade levels. Its basic assumption is that a guidance program should help each child to acquire behavior patterns which each will use in developing the maximum of his or her potential.

A major thrust of the program is through the curriculum and classroom, with the counselor acting as a catalyst, consultant or coordinator in cooperation with other staff members. But a thrust of equal importance is the individual and group counseling function, with the counselor encouraging and helping students to develop their own potential. The relative degree of commitment to these two thrusts in terms of time and effort should correlate rather directly with the pupils' level of maturity.

The counselor's catalyzing, consulting and coordinating efforts are directed toward promoting the kinds of school and home environment most conducive to the pupil's normal development. To achieve this goal, the counselor works extensively with those most responsible for creating those environments. The counselor thus assists teachers, parents and others in applying knowledge about child behavior and development to the environment in which the pupil lives.

The counseling efforts are directed toward helping pupils to discover themselves and to relate those discovered selves to their environment. They also are aimed at helping pupils develop their decision-making capability and at the early testing of that capability. And they are concerned with assisting the pupils in dealing with everyday problems that are part of normal human development.

The developmental approach is the only one of the three designed to serve the needs of all pupils in the school -- an assumption basic to guidance. With its focus on positive aspects of behavior and on strengths rather than weaknesses, it can overcome the problem-oriented attitude of the crisis orientation or preventative approaches to guidance. Only then can guidance be seen as a normal part of the learning process rather than as treatment for deviant behavior. By focusing on the total learning environment, developmental guidance places a major responsibility on everyone in the school to provide the kinds of attention, planning and assistance needed for the maximum development of each pupil. And, perhaps more important, a program thus conceived and implemented will attend to the developmental needs of children and thus eliminate the causes of many of the problems and crises in school. Developmentally conceived guidance can become an integral part of the school's learning process and foster in staff and pupils the need to accentuate the positive in terms of abilities and behavior.

No matter how desirable and comprehensive the developmental approach, however, the counselor will still be, and <u>should</u> still be, called on to deal with crises and to use a preventative approach to the problems which appear suddenly on the horizon. While the incidence of crisis and need for emergency intervention is expected to diminish as the developmental approach is put into effect, there will still be some need to deal with these situations, a need which the counselor cannot and should not ignore. Nevertheless, for the reasons stated above, the Division of Pupil Personnel Services strongly urges that the developmental thrust be the primary approach toward guidance at all educational levels.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The counselor, in developing a personal working policy with regard to confidentiality, must first become familiar with federal and state laws, State Board of Education regulations, ethical codes of professional organizations and local school district policies relating to this matter. Each district guidance department should have a written policy on confidentiality, but such a policy should allow counselors to interpret and apply that policy in keeping with their personal philosophy.

In the paragraphs which follow, we will outline the major considerations and steps to be taken in developing a personal working policy on confidentiality.

1. Federal Legislation. The counselor should first be aware of the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974" as amended. This Act has the force of law in all school districts using federal funds and deals with written student records. Accompanying regulations refer also to tape-recorded records.

2. State Legislation. The counselor should then refer to Act 287 of 1972, entitled "Confidentiality of Student Communications" (Act 287 appears in the appendix of this document). This Act lists a number of school employes, including the counselor, who shall not be "compelled or allowed" to disclose confidential information in legal proceedings without the consent of the student or the student's parent if the student is younger than 18 years old. This legal base for confidentiality is considered in more detail later.

3. State Board of Education Regulations. The counselor should be aware of the State Board regulations dealing with pupil records. These regulations, which appear in sections 12.31 and 12.32 of Chapter 12 (Students) of the Pennsylvania Code, Title 22, Education, state that each school district must adopt a Department of Education-approved plan for the collection, maintenance and dissemination of pupil records. They also offer guidelines to which the district plan must conform.

4. Ethical Codes of Professional Organizations. The counselor should be familiar with the ethical standards statement of the American Personnel and Guidance Association and the Code of Ethics of the American School Counselor Association. (The ASCA Code of Ethics is included in the appendix of this document.) Further discussion of ethical considerations appears later in this section.

5. School Policy. The counselor should have a thorough knowledge of the school district's pupil records policy required by State Board regulations. The school administration also may choose to develop a supplementary policy covering the broader and more inclusive area of confidentiality. This policy should serve as a guide to the guidance department in developing a policy applicable to guidance staff operation.

6. Guidance Department Policy. The guidance department should develop a policy statement covering all aspects of confidentiality in the guidance program. The department should assume responsibility for publicizing the policy so that all faculty, students, administrators and parents are aware of its contents or have been exposed to the document. Anyone who supplies information to the guidance effort should know the degree of confidentiality

with which that information will be treated.

7. Counselor's Personal Working Policy. In carrying out the guidance department's policy, a realistic approach would recognize that counselors will be influenced in their individual application of confidentiality by their personal philosophy of the scope, techniques and purposes of counseling. The department's policy would thus do well to state that, while conformity to school and department policies is encouraged, there will probably be differences in counselors' actual practice of confidentiality, and that it will be the responsibility of the counselor to communicate to counselees his or her policy concerning information supplied during individual or group counseling sessions.

   The counselor's personal working policy should include statements dealing with:

   a. The circumstances, if any, under which the counselor would feel obligated to transmit information to others without the counselee's consent.

   b. The types of information, if any, the counselor would not consider confidential.

   c. The extent to which the counselor feels obligated to share student-supplied information with parents.

   d. The degree to which the counselor can assure the counselee that his or her consent will be required before transmitting information to anyone.

8. Departmental Position on Confidentiality. Implicit in the preceding seven points is a concept of confidentiality which relates to both written (school records) and oral (counseling conferences) communications. Federal and state laws and their accompanying regulations have quite extensively and definitively dealt with the issue of confidential school records, but the same type of direction is not available with regard to information revealed during the course of an interview or counseling contact in the school.

   Recently, the legislature has exempted the medical profession from reporting certain conditions to parents and from securing parental approval for the treatment of minors if the physician feels that parental contact would inhibit effective treatment or the seeking of such treatment by the minor (Act 10, 1970; Act 63, 1972).

   If we recognize that the effective counselor offers similar services and encounters similar inhibition in some instances of parental contact, it follows that similar rights of discretion must be extended to the counselor.

   Board or administrative policy should in no way restrict or limit the counselor's ability to employ discretion in confidentiality and in appropriate referral and parental contact.

   We urge that board or administrative policies concerned with confidentiality should be neither rigid nor restrictive, but should allow the counselor to

use the discretion so necessary to effective counseling.

* * *

The counselor who has studied the laws, regulations, codes and policies noted in these paragraphs probably knows that two concepts of confidentiality are intermingled in them. At one point we are dealing with the legal basis for confidentiality; at another we are concerned with ethical considerations. To lessen the confusion, we include here a discussion of confidentiality which focuses on the ethical and legal aspects of this complex issue.

Two Concepts of Confidentiality

Confidentiality may be viewed from two frames of reference. First, the term may refer to one's personal obligation to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of the counselee. This obligation arises from the responsibilities one accepts as a member of a professional organization (such as the American Personnel and Guidance Association) and adherence to that association's code of ethics. This type of confidentiality has no direct legal basis; instead, ethical confidentiality is based exclusively on the good faith of the counselor and his or her willingness to refrain from divulging information provided by the counselee. Such a relationship is founded on trust and exists exclusively for the protection of the counselee.

A second type of confidentiality is synonymous with the term "privileged communication." Both terms originate in the legal definition of immunity and, therefore, are based on law. This type of confidentiality is much like that which exists between attorney and client. Where such a legal condition of confidentiality exists, communications may not be divulged in a court proceeding without the consent of the counselee. As was the case with ethical confidentiality, legal confidentiality exists primarily for the protection of the counselee. (Many persons erroneously assume that legal confidentiality or privileged communication exists primarily for the protection of the counselor.)

Act 287 has established legal confidentiality for certain public, private and parochial school employes. This Act prohibits these employes from divulging in legal proceedings any information a student gives in confidence; unless consent has been given.

This type of legislatively established confidentiality would protect the student only in legal proceedings. Privileged communication does not apply to pre-legal or nonlegal situations; therefore, it offers the counselor and counselee only limited protection.

The enactment of legislation similar to Act 287 would probably do little to insure that counselors behave more ethically in regard to student communications; nor would it be likely to make students more willing to reveal personal matters to counselors. The two concepts of confidentiality remain detached from one another. This detachment should be acknowledged whenever we use the term, and the different nature of the two areas should be fully recognized.

PEER COUNSELING

Peer counseling in our schools may take a number of forms. In outlining a position on peer counseling, it is necessary to deal separately with each of these forms.

1. Informal, unsponsored peer counseling. Students have always, and will always, confide in and seek advise from friends. This, in a very true sense, is peer counseling, but it is peer counseling without any formal authorization from the school administration or the guidance department and, hence, without any direct responsibility on the part of those school agencies.

2. Group counseling. Good group counseling is, in actuality, often peer counseling. It has the added ingredient, however, of observation and direction by a trained counselor. Most of the counseling in a well-run group session is done by peers, but the school counselor provides subtle guidance to the group process, encourages the development of certain points which come out of the unstructured discussion and insures the opportunity for balanced reaction to all points. This, then, is peer counseling under the control of the guidance department, and the department must assume responsibility for the program and its outcomes and for whatever transpires in the group sessions. A complete guidance program should have group counseling which fosters positive peer interaction while accepting the related responsibilities of this process.

3. Student tutoring. A growing number of schools have enlisted abler students as tutors for those having trouble with specific subjects. The program appears to be working well in many schools and seems a valuable addition to the instructional program. Since tutors are extensions of the instructional staff, they are accountable to the school, and the school administration is responsible for the quality of their services. These tutors should be well screened, trained and supervised.

The student tutor at times may find that he or she is becoming involved in counseling. It should be stressed that the tutor is not a counselor, and that any counseling is done without the endorsement of the school or the guidance department. Tutors should be advised to encourage the tutored student to see the school counselor. To assure that the tutored student is not failing to receive possibly needed counseling, counselors should make a point of seeing all tutored students early in the tutoring period.

4. Formal, sponsored peer counseling. This has come to be the basic approach implied when peer counseling is mentioned. In this approach, the guidance department selects certain students which it designates as peer counselors. In some schools these peer counselors are assigned to a counseling room during free time, and the news is circulated that they are available for counseling. In other schools the counselor refers certain counselees to them. In still others it is made known that they are peer counselors, they do their own recruiting in the halls and classrooms, and they request and are given counseling space as needed. In all cases they have some form of endorsement from the school and/or the guidance department.

One of the main justifications for this program is that some students relate better to peers than to adults and are more likely to seek help from a peer, thus placing the peer in a position where he or she can be of more help than the adult counselor. The guidance department's responsibility should be to see that the

resulting peer counseling is of sufficiently high quality.

We suggest that a school embarking on a formalized peer counseling program do so with a great deal of planning. In such a program, the guidance department must accept responsibility for the counseling done by the peer counselors, but often lacks the degree of control that should go with that responsibility. If, after thorough study, the guidance department is convinced that a department-sponsored program of peer counseling will achieve objectives otherwise unattainable, and that the achievement of such objectives is essential to the full success of the guidance program and the needs of the school population, then a well-planned approach to the program should be undertaken. We offer the following guidelines:

a. The guidance department should initiate the process of peer counselor selection. Putting out a general call for volunteers often produces a large number of unsatisfactory candidates. Sociograms and other appraisals from the student record should be combined with counselor and teacher recommendations to form an initial basis for invitation to participate in the program, with student acceptance being voluntary.

b. A training program should be established to give peer counselors a basic knowledge of theory and technique, along with an understanding of the possible limits of their competency. Training program graduates should know at what point they should suggest voluntary self-referral of counselees to the regular school counselors.

c. Peer counselors should have a complete understanding of their relationship to the school counseling staff. What are the limits of their pledge of confidentiality to the counselee? To what degree are they obligated to share information with the school counselor, and at what point are they obligated to consult their school counselor advisor?

d. There should be an on-going series of conferences with the peer counselors, so the adult counselor can assess the peer counselor's attitude toward his or her counseling role and gain some idea of the quality of counseling the peer counselor is offering.

e. The adult counselor should, without jeopardizing the counseling relationship between the peer counselor and the counselee, meet with the counselee sometime during the peer counseling experience. The adult counselor need not refer to the peer counseling, but should attempt to gauge how effectively the peer counseling program is operating.

COUNSELOR-PUPIL RATIO

A variety of concerned groups and educational sages have dogmatically set forth any number of counselor-pupil ratios which, they claim, will assure a comprehensive program of guidance and counseling services. Somehow, this high degree of dogmatism has failed to insure an equally high degree of acceptance.

Others have rushed to the opposite extreme. These people find their view of the counseling forest obscured by the growing use of group techniques, peer counseling, paraprofessionals and instructional staff. They state that any attempt at an overall pronouncement on ratio is impossible. But however reasoned their arguments, they also fail to obtain considerable support.

The counselor-pupil ratio, as an issue, will not go away. It is present when the legislature considers mandating guidance services. It is present when local school boards examine proposed budgets and the expansion of guidance programs. It is there when school administrators attempt objective evaluations of their programs. Considerations of ratio have blocked legislation, stampeded school boards and added to the administrator's burden.

Is there no middle ground? Is there no criterion that we can use to arrive at an acceptable and significant ratio?

The counselor has become many things with a multiplicity of duties. But the counselor still is, and must remain, someone who is there when needed by the student in search of help. In short, the counselor must be available. A look at guidance programs around the Commonwealth, however, shows that the counselor is not available. There is so much to be done and there are so few persons to do it that the student who must see the counselor as soon as possible doesn't.

Is counselor availability, then, a reasonably acceptable criterion for determining the counselor-pupil ratio? How many counselors do you need in your school to assure that there will be a counselor available to see the student who needs individual help?

At the elementary level, availability would seem to dictate that there be at least one full-time counselor in each elementary building. If the building houses more than 800 elementary students, we feel there should be at least one counselor for each 800 students or fraction thereof.

Since the focus at the secondary level is more directly on individual counseling and the demand for such counseling is usually much greater, a ratio of at least one counselor for every 400 students should be workable.

These figures will, we feel, provide for a good chance that the child will find someone in when he or she comes looking for help.

We suggest that each school district start at this point and build on it the ideal ratio for the district. In striving toward the ideal, each district should examine the proposed size and scope of the district's individual counseling program, the degree to which individual counseling is supported and supplemented by group counseling and guidance, and the extent to which instructional, peer and paraprofessional personnel are used.

THE PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES TEAM

Most schools today employ a number of persons who would be considered members of the pupil personnel services team. Our concern here is with the establishment of a fully functioning and effective PPS team and with the guidance staff's use of the full potential of that team.

We support the establishment of an integrated and coordinated pupil personnel services team whose members have regular opportunities to confer with one another about areas of mutual concern. Each member of that team should have a clear understanding of the other members' objectives and functions and full opportunity to make use of their services.

To provide for coordination of the team effort and to assure central supervision of the overall activity program, a qualified person should be designated director of pupil personnel services with responsibility for that coordination and supervision. We feel the appointment of such a person would in no way eliminate the need for separate direction and supervision of the guidance program by an individual appointed as supervisor of guidance. This is discussed in more detail in the section titled "The Need for Guidance Supervision."

A strong effort should be made to provide for a flow of information about individual students among members of the pupil personnel services staff consistent with established policies of confidentiality. In keeping with the obvious efficiency of shared information, it is important that a system be devised to indicate when one pupil service has student information which may be of interest and value to other involved or concerned services. This system should provide ease of access to records among pupil personnel services staff and should facilitate the sharing of student information among the several services.

An operating manual for the pupil personnel services team should be developed under the supervision of the pupil personnel services director. This manual should contain descriptions of the objectives and functions of each of the pupil personnel services; a plan for initiating and scheduling team meetings; and workable procedures for the handling of referrals, transfer of information and follow-up among the various pupil personnel disciplines.

Rather than go into detail here about the contributions each service can and should make to the total team effort, we will refer the reader to the Department of Education publication, Pupil Personnel Services in Pennsylvania: A Position Statement, prepared in 1971 and mailed to all school districts at that time.

We believe the establishment of a well-functioning pupil personnel services team will greatly increase the effectiveness of the guidance department; will provide for the extension of guidance objectives into many related service areas; and will broaden tremendously the impact of guidance in the school, home and community. For this reason, it is in the best interest of the guidance department to take the initiative in encouraging the team structure where there is none at present, or in the supporting of fuller and more effective use of the team where it now exists.

THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE SUPERVISION

A comprehensive guidance program that attempts to provide a full range of services adequate to the needs of the school and community will have a strong need for planning, in-service training, professional direction and coordination at all levels. The extent of activities required for initiating and supervising planning, for properly planning and conducting in-service, for adequately coordinating activities and for providing sufficient direction and evaluation points to the need for a person charged primarily with these responsibilities.

A number of districts, some quite large, employ a director of pupil personnel services who has direct responsibility for directing the guidance program, with no supervisory position between the director of pupil personnel services and the counselor. Other districts of varying sizes have assigned the task to superintendents or other administrative personnel who usually have many other assignments. Still other districts have no staff member assigned to the position and operate an often loosely organized program based on informal counselor-to-counselor communication. Finally, a growing number of districts employ a certified guidance supervisor trained in, experienced in and chiefly concerned with guidance.

In preparing guidelines for a model program, to be published later, we identified 41 distinct activities and responsibilities which we felt were especially applicable to a person charged with directing the district's total guidance program. Not included in the 41 are the normal daily responsibilities common to all who supervise highly skilled personnel who face, and must react to, a constantly changing range of challenges.

Since the title "guidance supervisor" would seem to require that there be people to supervise, and since the person awarded the title would be required to have supervisory certification, a question arises as to how many counselors should be employed before a guidance supervisor is required.

It is axiomatic that the larger the staff, the greater the need for formal supervision and coordination. We believe that when staff size reaches four or five counselors, the time and effort needed to actively supervise and coordinate activities establish a definite need for a certified guidance supervisor. But we also recognize that even the one-counselor program needs planning, coordination of the guidance-related efforts of the instructional staff, in-service for those who perform guidance functions, direction of the guidance program and evaluation of the guidance effort. Since these activities would most efficiently be performed by a person trained and experienced in guidance, it follows that, even in a single-counselor system, that counselor should have the responsibilities of a guidance supervisor. Formal recognition by title and appropriate recompense should be added as the staff increases in size toward the minimum of four or five mentioned above.

In summation, we believe that, regardless of staff size, responsibility for supervision of the guidance program should be entrusted to a guidance staff member and that, as staff size approaches four or five, the formal title and appropriate compensation should be awarded.

DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING

Any consideration of differentiated staffing should treat two separate issues: (1) differentiation of assignment within the professional counseling staff and (2) the use of other staff personnel who have varying types of preparation, levels of competency and work assignments.

1. Differentiation of Professional Counseling Assignment

Pre-service preparation and in-service training of counselors should produce practitioners who are able to deal with a full range of counseling situations, who know the limits of their ability and who know where to refer people when necessary. Some counselors, however, will emerge with greater competency, interest and ease of operation in certain areas of counseling.

In recognition of this reality, we recommend that the guidance supervisor assume responsibility for identifying counselors' areas of strength and for assigning certain program objectives and students who have particular counseling needs to the most appropriate counselors.

Recognizing that counseling needs change and that rapport is a key ingredient in successful counseling, we urge that there be enough flexibility in counselee assignments to allow for easy changes and for counselee freedom to request assignment to a counselor of his or her choice if the situation warrants such freedom of choice.

2. Use of Other Staff Personnel with Varying Types of Preparation and Competency

At several places in the "Guidance Services" section of this paper, there is mention of the need for paraprofessional involvement. Also stressed throughout this paper is the view that the professional counselor should primarily engage in counseling and consultation. If the counselor is to counsel and consult, then there must be adequate paraprofessional and clerical support to free the counselor for these two roles.

The role of paraprofessionals in each district will often depend on the type of personnel available to the district. A person with training in educational measurement, for example, should be able to assume major responsibilities in testing. In other activities, such as career resource center operation, survey supervision, record maintenance and information dissemination, varying degrees of formal education might be acceptable, the choice of personnel depending more on the apparent competency of the applicant.

In the use of paraprofessionals, caution should be exercised in defining the limits of the particular job assignment. For example, the paraprofessional in charge of the career resource center should have a clear idea of the point at which information dissemination ends and career counseling begins, so that he or she may recommend counseling or bring the counselor into the picture at the proper time.

The need for adequate clerical assistance would seem obvious, but is mentioned here because there are large numbers of counselors in the Commonwealth who are still spending considerable time on clerical chores. The district that has spent the money needed to hire a trained professional counselor should find

it economically unwise to have that counselor functioning as a clerical employe.

We believe there is economic and programmatic justification for the full use of paraprofessional and clerical personnel in the implementation of a comprehensive guidance program. Opportunities for the use of such personnel should be explored in each district, guidelines for their use should be written, and an intensive effort should be made to find community people who can best supply the needed services.

GUIDANCE CONSIDERATIONS IN THE AVTS-SENDING SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

There are two types of area vocational-technical schools in the Commonwealth -- full-time and part-time. The guidance program developed by each AVTS should be consistent with its type of operation.

In the full-time AVTS, the students take both vocational and general education courses in that school. A broad comprehensive guidance program, offering the full range of guidance services, is necessary to meet the needs of these students.

The part-time school, which is of prime concern here, differs in that the students spend half of their school time at the AVTS and the other half at the sending school. There is a shared responsibility for providing a comprehensive program of guidance services to these vocational students. To meet stated objectives and avoid unnecessary duplication of services, the AVTS and the sending school must have a closely coordinated guidance program. This program should be cooperatively developed, periodically evaluated and modified as determined by student needs and changing program objectives.

While the students are spending only half their time in the AVTS, their problems and needs are whole. It is therefore necessary that the AVTS counseling program be comprehensive enough to deal with both the entire individual and the full range of counseling problems. If there is a choice, it is better to have duplication rather than lack services when and where thay are needed. Such a choice calls for a counseling staff adequate in number and in training and skill to provide for a full range of personal, educational and vocational counseling services. Since the AVTS program is likely to be more closely involved in and related to the student's present and future concerns, it is conceivable that the AVTS counselors will be called upon to deal with a wider range of problems and concerns than the sending school counselors. This should be a major consideration in training AVTS counselors and in assigning guidance and counseling duties.

Locally developed guidelines should be established regarding the guidance relationship between the sending schools and the AVTS. We offer the following recommendations:

1. In planning guidance services for the AVTS, differences in the programs of the individual sending schools should be taken into consideration, keeping in mind that each individual AVTS-sending school guidance program requires a unique cooperative effort.

2. Lines of communication between the AVTS and the sending school should be open at all times. A guidance or pupil personnel services council, involving guidance personnel from the AVTS and each sending school, should be established. Meetings should be scheduled periodically throughout the school year to discuss common issues and concerns and to share general information of importance to the successful operation of the cooperative guidance program.

3. Procedures for selection and orientation of students should be developed cooperatively and adopted by the joint board as policy. Admissions criteria should be consistent, yet flexible enough to allow for differences in students' interests, aptitudes and needs.

4. The sending school should be responsible for providing students with career information and occupational materials prior to entrance into the AVTS, with the AVTS providing special information. Once the student has entered the AVTS, that school should take over the responsiblity for providing career information and materials. The sending school counselors should help the instructional staff to prepare students for the AVTS by making subjects relevant to the future careers and training opportunities available at the AVTS.

5. Job placement and provision for follow-up information about postsecondary vocational technical education opportunities can be shared by the sending school and the AVTS, with the degree of each school's involvement depending on the school's specific responsibility for the student's vocational development. The distribution of activities should be carefully worked out so that both parties know their role and share in evaluating the outcomes.

6. Sending schools will, in most cases, have a comprehensive testing program designed to measure achievement, aptitude and interest. However, the AVTS should be prepared to offer supplementary testing services as the need arises. In either case, the results should be interpreted to the students to help them better understand their capabilities and how these may be applied in the vocational area.

7. A full range of individual and group counseling services should be available to both the AVTS and the sending school. Both schools should have an adequate staff of trained counselors.

8. Although there is a definite need to share student information, that sharing should be consistent with the sending school's policy on confidentiality and the dissemination of pupil records. The AVTS should comply with the home school's policy.

LIFE-CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The concept of human growth as a continuous developmental process implies that an individual progresses through various life stages which require the mastery of certain tasks. Progression through these stages is influenced not only by inherited individual differences, but by a wide range of social and environmental factors.

As an aspect of this approach to human growth and development, life-career development requires greater understanding and attention by guidance specialists and teachers alike. It should, in fact, be a focal point of the guidance program.

This aspect tends to underline the increasing importance of the relationship between vocational maturity and self-concept. Our accelerated technology has brought about a more dehumanizing society in which the process of choosing a career, finding satisfaction and reward in one's labor, and creating a life style which reflects one's personal values and aspirations has assumed a much greater importance than it had in the immediate past. To this end, the use of the term "life-career" has come to mean that the work an individual does during his or her lifetime holds a central place in the shaping of a purposeful life pattern.

Life-career development, considered in terms of school programs, requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and an accompanying set of attitudes and skills having to do with the worlds of education, work and leisure as they relate to the self. A major area of concern is the development of adequate decision-making skills which will be useful not only in choosing a career but also in life generally.

Activities related to career development should be introduced in the early years of elementary school to help children understand themselves and the world in which they live and develop positive attitudes toward that world, including, but not limited to, work.

The middle or junior high school years should be devoted to exploring the world of work more deliberately. At that time, young people begin to develop an awareness and understanding of their individual attributes and characteristics. relating these to the perceived environment and future personal goals.

During the high school years, students begin working toward a specific, though still tentative, career choice. Those for who schooling will end at grade 12 require job placement assistance, and others need highly specific educational counseling.

Life-career development does not end at grade 12 or even at the end of formal education; people need help at crucial points all along the developmental pathway and throughout life. Since service to adults is extremely limited in most communities, the school counseling staff must examine its possible continuing responsibility to those who have left school and are seeking a full life and career development.

In sum, life-career development is concerned primarily with helping people to integrate career concerns with self-image; to master the interpersonal skills needed in life; to acquire skills in life-career planning; and to gain a knowledge and understanding of life roles and their relationship to education, work and leisure.

For a detailed guide to the full implementation of a possible model, see the Pennsylvania Career Development Guide, Grades K-12, mentioned in the related publications section of this paper.

THE AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR GUIDANCE SERVICES

In February 1976, at the suggestion of the State Advisory Committee for Guidance Services, the Department of Education convened an ad hoc committee to develop criteria for evaluating school guidance programs.

The charge we gave the 10 members of the committee stressed two things. First, we were looking for a set of simply stated, objective and observable criteria which, in total, would constitute a description of a comprehensive guidance program and upon which a possible evaluation instrument could later be developed. Second, in setting the level of quality, we were not interested in either a minimum program which all districts would automatically achieve or an ideal program which might be out of reach for some. Instead, we were interested in a good, solid program toward which some would have to strive.

The ad hoc committee members gave us a document which we feel deserves the examination and consideration of anyone interested in the quality of guidance in Pennsylvania. Listed below are the 10 educators and guidance leaders who worked on the committee.

Representing the State Advisory Committee for Guidance Services

Alfred Gallagher -- Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Delaware County Intermediate Unit
James Higgens -- Director of Pupil Personnel Services
North Hills School District
William Krizan -- School Counselor
Swissvale Area Joint High School
Ethel Risbon -- Director of Guidance
Southern Lehigh School District

Representing the Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Betsy Bloomquist -- Legislative Liaison
Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Representing the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals

Frederick Smith -- Principal
School Street Junior High School, Bradford

Representing the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association

Donald Diffenbaugh -- Executive Secretary
Pennsylvania School Counselors Association

Selected for their expertise in their particular area and their leadership in guidance

Robert Cormany -- Coordinator of Special Services
West Shore School District
John Slimmer -- Elementary School Counselor
Chambersburg Area School District
Evelyn Woodson -- Junior High School Counselor
Phoenixville Area School District

PROPOSED EVALUATIVE CRITERIA -- AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR GUIDANCE SERVICES

1. The schedule of the counselor shall be flexible enough to provide all students with individual counseling upon request or referral.

2. The guidance staff provides a developmental or solution-oriented group counseling service as needed.

3. A regular and systematic program of sessions for class groups is established as an integral part of the instructional program to disseminate and formally and informally discuss value situations, career development and other information relevant to the needs of the individual.

4. Counselors are available to parents, students and teachers to interpret records, as provided in the district policy.

5. Counselors are knowledgeable about student records policy so that they can advocate student/parent interests.

6. The school counselor shall be involved in a consultant and/or leadership role in the development and implementation of the district program of testing and self-appraisal.

7. The school counselor shall provide an organized system of current informational resources, K-12, for students and parents on which they may base educational, personal-social and vocational decision-making.

8. Career resource centers are set up and functioning as part of guidance services offered to the students.

9. Counselors, along with teachers, administrators and students, shall have a major role in planning and implementing orientation activities for all students moving into new educational levels and/or new educational programs.

10. The school counselors shall work, formally and informally, in collaboration with teachers, administrators and other school staff with the ultimate goal that the total school's resources are aimed toward meeting individual pupil needs.

11. A school initiated program of parental involvement in guidance shall be aimed at helping parents to understand their children's growth and development.

12. Parental input shall be sought in helping to implement and maintain programs involving guidance and counseling on a continuous basis.

13. The guidance staff maintains an active listing of all community agencies performing services which may help to meet the needs of students and their parents and the school.

14. An active liaison relationship and personal contact on a regular basis with such community agencies exists to promote communication.

15. The counselor's responsibility is to coordinate the efforts of the school and the agencies.

16. A balanced program of educational and vocational placement shall be provided by the guidance staff for students at all levels through an organized system in cooperation with parents, students and community.

17. The guidance department shall develop and implement an ongoing research design to measure the effectiveness of the school's guidance program.

18. Facilities, with a waiting room separate from administrative offices, shall be provided so as to make it possible for the counselor to carry out all elements of the guidance program of the school.

19. The facilities are accessible to the student body and also provide a counseling and guidance environment that will attract students to utilize the service.

20. The district has a duly certified director of pupil personnel services or a director of guidance services who supervises and coordinates a districtwide guidance program, as approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

21. The guidance staff is comprised of counselors who are properly certified.

22. Each secondary counselor is assigned to work with no more than 350 students.

23. Each elementary counselor is assigned to work with no more than 700 students.

24. Counselors perform only those professional duties for which they are trained.

25. Effort is made in the assignment of counselors to have the counselor-student relationship develop over a period of more than one year.

26. Clerical help is provided at a ratio of at least one to three counselors to perform such duties as typing, filing, handling phone messages and other duties as the local situation may require.

27. Paraprofessional help is provided to assist counselors in semi-professional duties such as coordinating and maintaining the career and informational resources, educational planning, preparation of reports and studies, dissemination of guidance information in group situations, and other such duties as may be designated in a job description prepared by the guidance staff.

28. Community guidance and counseling, including educational, vocational and social counseling and a referral service should be made available to resident out of school citizens who express a need for such services within the limitations of facilities, staff and time.

29. On-going professional development opportunities shall be provided and counselors shall be encouraged to participate.

30. The counselor's role and function shall be cooperatively defined by administrators and counselors.

31. The school district has a policy on confidential communications which guarantees a confidential relationship between counselor and client and disseminates this policy to all who use the counseling service.

PREPARATION OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION

One of the first steps in establishing a guidance program in a district must be to prepare job descriptions for the members of the guidance staff. Rather than trying to design a model description which would apply to all the types and sizes of school districts and communities, we will deal with the need, the process of development and the content of such a description.

Need

There are several major reasons why it is desirable to have a written job description for the counselor. Primary among these is to promote the most efficient use of a counselor's time. The counselor could be engaged in many more duties than can be practically accomplished. A job description should pinpoint the duties considered most appropriate. The concern here is not to limit counselors' flexibility but to provide guidelines for discriminating among the many tasks that may impinge on their time.

The job description can also be useful in recruiting and orienting new staff. It should provide job candidates with a concise picture of what the local educational agency expects of the counselor so that candidates can judge whether their skills or interests are such that they could fit into that situation. Also, once on the job, this description can help fit the new counselors smoothly into the educational program rather than leave them floundering in uncertainty while trying to discover what is expected of them.

In districts that have differentiated staffing, a series of job descriptions will prevent unnecessary overlapping by people performing the various complementary roles. Also, the job description can serve as a base on which to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance program.

Development

Job descriptions should be developed cooperatively by the guidance staff, the administration and representatives of the community. If the school does not have a guidance council made up of these elements, the writing of a job description should provide an excellent opportunity for creating such a council. While the counselors themselves should have a major role in determining which duties are most appropriate and best accomplished in their department, the administration must consider how these duties fit into the framework of the total school program, and the community representatives must keep an eye on the extent to which these duties will satisfy the needs of the community. This cooperative approach should reduce the possibility that counselors will be seen as an arm of the administration or as an entity apart from the other aspects of the total school program. It should also help to insure that the community does not see the counselor as isolated from community concerns.

The role the counselor plays will vary from one district to another in accordance with local philosophy and needs. It would, therefore, seem reasonable to determine, before a job description is put into writing, the needs of the various publics to be served. For further information on the process of studying such needs, the reader should refer to the Department of Education publication, Guidelines for Self-Study of a School District Guidance Program.

Content

A single job description probably will not suffice for any but the smallest districts. Substantial differences undoubtedly will exist among the job descriptions for elementary counselors, middle level counselors, secondary counselors and directors of guidance on all three dimensions discussed in the following sections.

A job description should contain at least three components -- qualifications, role and duties.

Under qualificiations, the title of the prescribed professional certificate, supplemented by any additional educational or experiental requirements, should be noted. Any other factors that will be considered in filling the position should also be specified.

The portion of the job description dealing with the role of the counselor should focus on the counselor's place in the total faculty and program of the school, including both the line and staff framework within which the counselor must operate and the responsibility and authority delegated to, or denied, the counselor. A well-defined role will prevent conflicts among staff members and promote a team approach to pupil services.

The most extensive section of the job description should be devoted to the duties of the counselor. These duties should reflect the philosophy of guidance as well as the overall philosophy of the district. Guidelines for developing a list of duties are available in the role statements of the various state and national counselors organizations, the State Board regulations and the section of this position paper dealing with the services of a guidance program. If the district places priority on certain duties, this should be established in this part of the job description.

We have not attempted, in this section, to specify the qualifications, roles and duties of a counselor. Such composites are, at best, inappropriate for a particular district's situation and very possibly confusing because they do not cover all possible options. The job descriptions may vary greatly from district to district within the limits established by law and regulation.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

The following Department of Education publications are related to this paper and should be of value to people seeking additional information in particular areas. As indicated, some of the publications are out of print and no longer available, but most of them were mailed to school districts in the past and may be found in the district.

1. Evaluation of Selected Career Resource Centers in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational Education (1973). No longer available.

2. Guidelines for Establishing Career Resource Centers, Pennsylvania Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational Education (1973).

3. Guidelines for Self-Study of a School District Guidance Program, Bureau of Instructional Support Services (1974).

4. Pennsylvania Career Development Guide, Grades K-12, Bureau of Instructional Support Services and Bureau of Vocational and Technical Education (1976).

5. Pennsylvania Code, Title 22, Education, Chapter 12, Sections 12.31 and 12.32 dealing with student records. Available from the Bureau of Instructional Support Services.

6. Pupil Personnel Services in Pennsylvania: A Position Statement, Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services (1971). No longer available.

APPENDIX

43

REGULATIONS

OF THE

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHAPTER 7
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES
(Adopted May 10, 1974)

Subchapter A. General Provisions

Section 7.1 Definition.
7.2 General Policy.

§§ 7.1. Definitions.

The following, when used in this Chapter, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Pupil Personnel Services Program - A pupil personnel services program is a coordinated effort which includes, but is not limited to, guidance, psychological services, health services and home and school visitor (social work) services.

§§ 7.2. General Policy

(1) The provisions of this Chapter shall provide a basis for operating pupil personnel services programs in the public schools of the Commonwealth.

(2) These services shall be performed by persons certified in their individual area of pupil personnel services specialization in accordance with Regulations of the State Board of Education.

Subchapter B. Pupil Personnel Services Program

Section 7.11. Guidance Services.
7.12. Psychological Services.
7.13. Health Services
7.14. Home and School Visitor (Social Work) Services.

SS7.11. Guidance Services.

Each guidance services program shall include:

(1) A pupil records system.

(2) A system of testing and pupil self-appraisal.

(3) An organized system of informational resources on which to base educational and vocational decision-making.

(4) Individual and group counseling available to all pupils.

(5) Orientation activities for students new to each level of education and for transferring students.

(6) Consultation with teachers, administrators and other school staff, both formal and informal.

(7) A school-initiated system of parental involvement.

(8) Liaison with community agencies.

(9) Educational and vocational placement.

(10) Continuing research and evaluation of program effectiveness.

SS7.12. Psychological Services.

Each psychological services program shall include:

(1) Individual and group assessment procedures.

(2) A system for the early identification of learning potential and factors which affect the child's educational performance.

(3) A program of psychological education for school personnel, parents and community groups.

(4) A system of liaison and referrals with resources available outside of the school.

(5) Consultation and counseling with parents, students and school personnel.

(6) Research on the cognitive and affective development of children.

(7) Assistance in curricular design and program development.

(8) Written policies which assure ethical procedures in psychological activities.

SS7.13. Health Services.

Each health services program shall include:

(1) Procedures for monitoring the health status for pupils.

(2) Follow-up procedures and interpretation of pupil health needs to parents and school staff.

(3) Group and individual instructional activities to develop good health habits and attitudes.

(4) An intra-district school health reporting system.

(5) Liaison with community referral agencies.

(6) Continuous evaluation and annual reporting of program effectiveness.

(7) A comprehensive health history for each child.

SS7.14. Home and School Visitor (Social Work) Services.

Each home and school visitor (social work) services program shall include:

(1) Procedures for identifying, analyzing and reporting out-of-school conditions which affect pupil learning.

(2) A coordinated program of indepth social work services.

(3) A communications network between the home, the school and the community.

SS7.15. Coordination of Services.

Each school district operating a pupil personnel services program shall develop a plan which insures that individual services are coordinated in such a manner as to make maximum use of the contributions of each service.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Act 287 (1972)

Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30), entitled "An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," providing for confidentiality of student communications.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L. 30), known as the "Public School Code of 1949," is amended by adding after section 1318, a new section to read:

Section 1319. Confidentiality of Student Communications.--No guidance counselor, school nurse or school psychologist in the public schools or in private or parochial schools or other educational institutions providing elementary or secondary education, including any clerical worker of such schools and institutions, who, while in the course of his professional duties for a guidance counselor, school nurse or school psychologist, has acquired information from a student in confidence shall be compelled or allowed without the consent of the student, if the student is eighteen (18) years of age or over, or, if the student is under the age of eighteen (18) years, without the consent of his or her parent or legal guardian, to disclose that information in any legal proceeding, civil or criminal, trial, investigation before any grand, traverse or petit jury, or any officer thereof, before the General Assembly or any committee thereof, or before any commission, department or bureau of this Commonwealth, or municipal body, officer or committee thereof. Notwithstanding the confidentiality provisions of this section, no such person shall be excused or prevented from complying with the act of August 14, 1967 (P.L. 239), entitled "An act relating to gross physical neglect of, or injury to, children under eighteen years of age; requiring reports in such cases by examining physicians or heads of institutions to county public child welfare agencies; imposing powers and duties on county public child welfare agencies based on such reports; and providing penalties."

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS
Accepted by the ASCA Governing Board in October 1972

1. Responsibilities of the school counselor stem from these basic premises and basic tenets in the counseling process.

   A. Each person has the right to dignity as a human being

      1. without regard to race, sex, religion, color, socio-economic status

      2. without regard to the nature and results of behavior, beliefs and inherent characteristics.

   B. Each person has the right to individual self-development.

   C. Each person has the right to self-direction and responsibility for making decisions.

   D. The school counselor, equipped with professional competency, an understanding of the behavioral sciences and philosophical orientation to school and community, performs a unique, distinctive and highly specialized service within the context of the education purpose and structure of the school system. Performance of this rests upon acquired techniques and informed judgement which is an integral part of counseling. Punitive action is not a part of the counseling process. The school counselor shall use these skills in endeavoring constantly to insure that the counselee has the afore-mentioned rights and a reasonable amount of the counselor's time.

   E. The ethical conduct of the school counselors will be consistent with the state regulations.

   F. The school counselor may share information gained in the counseling process for essential consultation with those appropriate persons specifically concerned with the counselee. Confidential information may be released only with consent of the individual except when required by court order.

I. Principal responsibilities of the school counselor to PUPILS

   A. The school counselor

      1. has a principal obligation and loyalty to respect each person as an unique individual and to encourage that which permits individual growth and development.

      2. must not impose consciously his attitudes and values on the counselee though he is not obligated to keep his attitudes and values from being known.

3. should respect at all times the confidences of the counselee; should the counselee's condition be such as to endanger the health, welfare, and/or safety of self or others, the counselor is expected to report this fact to an appropriate responsible person.

4. shall be knowledgeable about the strengths and limitations of tests; will share and interpret test information with the counselee in an accurate, objective and understandable manner to assist the counselee in self-evaluation.

5. shall assist the counselee in understanding the counseling process in order to insure that the persons counseled understand how information obtained in conferences with the counselor may be used.

II. Principal responsibilities of the School Counselor to PARENTS

A. The school counselor

1. shall work with parents so as to enhance the development of the counselee.

2. shall treat information received from the parents of a counselee in a confidential manner.

3. shall share, communicate and interpret pertinent data, and the counselee's academic progress with his parents.

4. shall share information about the counselee only with those persons properly authorized to receive this information.

III. Principal responsibilities of the School Counselor to FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION AND COLLEAGUES

A. The school counselor

1. shall use discretion, within legal limits and requirements of the state in releasing personal information about a counselee to maintain the confidences of the counselee.

2. shall contribute pertinent data to cumulative records and make it accessible to professional staff (except personal factors and problems which are highly confidential in nature).

3. shall cooperate with colleagues by making available as soon as possible requested reports which are accurate, objective, meaningful and concise.

4. shall cooperate with other pupil personnel workers by sharing information and/or obtaining recommendations which would benefit the counselee.

5. may share confidential information when working with the same counselee, with the counselee's knowledge and permission.

6. must maintain confidentiality even though others may have the same knowledge.

7. shall maintain high professional integrity regarding fellow workers when assisting in problem areas related to actions, attitudes and competencies of faculty or colleagues.

IV. Principal responsibilities of the School Counselor to SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

A. The school counselor

1. shall support and protect the educational program against any infringement which indicates that it is not to the best interest of the counselee or program.

2. must assume responsibility in delineating his role and function, in developing educational procedure and program, and in assisting administration to assess accountability.

3. shall recommend to the administration any curricular changes necessary in meeting valid educational needs in the community.

4. shall work cooperatively with agencies, organizations and individuals in school and community which are interested in welfare of youths.

5. shall, with appropriate release, supply accurate information according to his professional judgement to community agencies, places of employment and institutions of higher learning.

6. should be knowledgeable on policies, laws, and regulations as they relate to the community, and use educational facilities accordingly.

7. shall maintain open communication lines in all areas pertinent to the best interest of counselees.

8. shall not accept remuneration beyond contractual salary for counseling any pupil within the school district. The counselor shall not promote or direct counselees into counseling or educational programs which would result in remuneration to the counselor.

9. shall delineate in advance his responsibilities in case of any confrontation and have an agreement which is supported by the administration and the bargaining agency.

V. Principal responsibilities of the School Counselor to SELF

A. The school counselor

1. should continue to grow professionally by

a. attending professional meetings

b. actively participating in professional organizations

c. being involved in research

d. keeping abreast of changes and new trends in the profession and showing a willingness to accept those which have proved to be effective.

2. should be aware of and function within the boundaries of his professional competency.

3. should see that his role is defined in mutual agreement among the employer, students to be served, and the counselor. Furthermore, this role should be continuously clarified to students, staff, parents and community.

VI. Principal responsibilities of the School Counselor to the PROFESSION

A. The school counselor

1. should be cognizant of the developments in his profession and be an active contributing participant in his professional association -- local, state and national.

2. shall conduct himself in a responsible manner and participate in developing policies concerning guidance.

3. should do research which will contribute to professional and personal growth as well as determine professional effectiveness.

4. shall under no circumstances undertake any group encounter or sensitivity sessions, unless he has sufficient professional training.

5. shall, in addition to being aware of unprofessional practices, also be accountable for taking appropriate action to eliminate these practices.

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